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# Threads for the Soul's Garment



Isabella K. Eldert





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# THREADS FOR THE SOUL'S GARMENT

ISABELLA K. ELDERT

11

*With loving thought of those who have entered  
"the place of light and refreshment."*



RICHARD G. BADGER  
THE GORHAM PRESS  
BOSTON

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THE GORHAM PRESS, BOSTON, U. S. A.

\$1.50

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720.1

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>The Snowdrops' Song</i> .....	9
<i>What God is Like Unto</i> .....	10
<i>The Passing of the Shadow</i> .....	11
“ <i>The Whole Creation Groaneth</i> ”.....	12
<i>Result</i> .....	13
<i>Opportunity</i> .....	14
<i>The Birdie's Love-Song</i> .....	16
<i>Ascension Lilies</i> .....	17
<i>Trust</i> .....	18
<i>The Soul's Mask</i> .....	19
<i>The Christ-Tide</i> .....	20
<i>Christmas Morn</i> .....	21
<i>Whisperings</i> .....	22
<i>Now</i> .....	23
<i>To Victory's Heights</i> .....	24
<i>Thou Shalt be Comforted</i> .....	25
<i>The Aftermath Cometh</i> .....	26
<i>The Other Side</i> .....	27

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Clouds</i> .....	28
<i>Thought</i> .....	30
“ <i>Sorrowful, Yet Alway Rejoicing</i> ”.....	31
<i>Thy Cross</i> .....	33
<i>The Dirge of the Old Year</i> .....	34
<i>To Waters Still and Pastures Green</i> .....	35
<i>His Soul</i> .....	36
<i>Life’s Threads</i> .....	37
<i>When Days Are Dark</i> .....	38
<i>Mary, the Mother of Our Lord</i> .....	40
<i>How Shall They Face the World</i> .....	42
<i>Love’s Vision</i> .....	44
“ <i>Peace at the Last</i> ”.....	45
<i>Resurrection-Links</i> .....	46
<i>De Profundis</i> .....	47
<i>When You and I</i> .....	49
<i>The Vision of the Stars</i> .....	50
<i>From Earth to Heaven</i> .....	53
<i>Recompense</i> .....	54
<i>When Sorrow Comes</i> .....	55

THREADS FOR THE SOUL'S GARMENT



God touched a soul that long had dormant lain,  
And straightway it awoke to consciousness  
Of all its poverty, its nakedness,  
Its want. In solemn silence vision came  
Of life arrayed as life might be, and swift  
Was born the knowledge that within it lay  
Large possibilities of raiment fresh  
And beautiful. Re-vitalized, intent  
Upon its work, it rose and into space  
Projected far seven strong foundation-lines:  
First love and next obedience, faith nearby,  
Calm fortitude, contentment, joy and peace,—  
Each perfect of its kind but all too frail  
To endure the daily strain of earth-desires  
Without the spirit's aid. Released from bondage sore  
It wove the garment for the soul to wear  
By drawing from the heart of every wound,  
Each thing that pleased (e'en love of sky and trees,  
The birds and flowers, the babbling brook  
Or ocean deep) an essence which it changed  
Into fair glistening threads, and wove each one  
Around and in and out those soul-laid lines.  
Abreast the swelling bosom of thought-waves,  
Within the caves beneath heart's surface hid  
The spirit found amid débris great pearls  
Most lustrous-white when woven into place.  
Where tear-drops fell (as sometimes it must be)  
There God flashed sunlight, and like diamonds  
They shone, while softly over warp and woof  
He threw a great protecting power like veil  
Of rainbow hue.

*Oh, soul that never dies  
Thus clothed! Oh spirit blest, absorbing God!  
Heaven would not part ye, earth cannot, and thus  
Forever one, salvation ye attain.  
In midst of discord, shedding peace; in midst  
Of suffering giving of your best; in midst  
Of trials standing firm, pass on to bliss!*  
*Amen.*

## THE SNOWDROPS' SONG

We're never unhappy, we Snowdrops, for lo!  
E'en under the sod we are growing, we know.  
So when dark are the days, most wintry the weather,  
We just cuddle down close and whisper together,  
"It's all right as it is, 'till with its warm glow,  
Love opens the way, and we rise thro' the snow."

## WHAT GOD IS LIKE UNTO

What God is like unto? Ah, this I ne'er can tell  
Whilst in its mortal covering my soul on earth doth  
dwell;  
But when, its bonds all sunder'd, my soul shall  
swiftly rise  
In joyful, rapturous gladness triumphant toward  
the skies,  
Each earthly shackle broken, my own, true self  
new-born,  
Clothed in immortal garments by souls redeemèd  
worn,  
All avenues of Knowledge thrown open to me,  
wide,—  
Then shall I see my Lord, my God, and so be satis-  
fied.

## THE PASSING OF THE SHADOW

The doves are at the window with their token of  
release,  
While hush as winter moonlight breathes a message  
full of peace.  
From hands of God's own angels mercies fall and  
pave the way  
For the passing on of shadow and the entrance of  
the day.

## “THE WHOLE CREATION GROANETH”

Heart of the universe of God, dost groan  
'Neath sighs and tears and sobs of sin-stained men?  
Dost struggle under barriers made? Dost free  
Thyself by sudden wrench and wield abroad  
Calamity and death? Oh, tell me then!  
Were heav'n again on earth would'st thou be less  
Severe? Would'st travail less? And sweetly  
smile

Where now thou bringest pain, its measurement  
Man's capability to learn? Would'st give  
But gentle touch where now tornadoes blow?  
In place of thunder, would men hear the word  
Wafted by breeze? Oh, tell me, Heart encased  
Within this universe of old! Were we  
To do heav'n's will, heal hearts of brother-men,  
Were peace to reign supreme, would'st thou be more  
Of God and less of pain? Strange secrets lurk  
Within thy bosom deep.

Methinks I hear  
The answer whispered soft: “In every breath  
I draw, I gather in the atmosphere  
Of man—God's agent placed upon the earth  
To bring forth all of good. Thy lesson learn,—  
Man's primal power wield, and waves will still.”

## RESULT

My life-work it lay 'mid the souls of weak men  
And I said to myself time oft and again,  
"Can I do it so bravely, so wisely and well  
That of God's loving kindness it surely will tell?  
Can I teach them the way to do ever the right  
Though bitter the struggle, most weary the fight?  
Can I, so imperfect, unerringly lead?  
So often soul-hungered, other wayfarers feed?"

Through the shadows of doubt a Voice came unto  
me,  
"Child, tremble not, fear not—'tis sufficient for  
thee  
To feel that God gave thee thy life-work on earth,  
That in heaven lies its goal and in heaven was its  
birth.  
Thou'rt responsible held but responsive thou art  
And the Lord of the harvest will do well His part  
In sustaining thy strength, so rejoice and to-day,  
Asking not the result, when He calls thee, obey."

## OPPORTUNITY

### A NEW YEAR'S GREETING

Did some one tell thee through the land  
There came a firm yet gracious hand  
To furnish weakened souls with cheer,  
From hearts bowed down to banish fear—  
Thou'dst greet this glad, this happy year.

Did some one tell thee that when days  
Would seem the darkest, then the rays  
Of hope would burst upon thy sight,  
That thenceforth thou would'st walk in light—  
Thou'dst greet this glad, this happy year.

Did some one tell thee that when most  
Thou neededst comfort, then a host  
Of angels pure on thee would shower  
Hope, love and peace—a heavenly dower—  
Thou'dst greet this glad, this happy year.

Did some one tell thee that sweet joy  
Would soon be thine, thou would'st employ  
Thy moments well and sing thy praise  
For all the happy, God-giv'n days  
Of this most glad, most happy year.

Would'st know all this? Then, this thing more:  
Before thee stands an open door;  
Within the room beyond it seen  
Thou'l find what else had never been  
To make thee glad this happy year.

Some opportunity to bless,  
Some load to lift, some wrong suppress.  
Echo with deed each duty call,  
So in Christ's name to thee and all  
Shall be a glad, a happy year.

## THE BIRDIES' LOVE-SONG

Hear the twittering of the song-bird  
As he flies from bough to bough;  
Hear him calling to his nest-mate,  
"Sweetheart, sweetheart, tell me how  
Love did bind us, love did teach us  
How to live, dear. Sweetheart, how?"

And the birdie in that home-nest  
Answers thus with tender coo:  
"Sweetheart, dear heart, one can never  
Put in words all love will do.  
Cease your flying, come and kiss me—  
Sweetheart, dear heart, I love you."

## ASCENSION LILIES

From out the thickest, blackest mud the fair white  
lilies rise;  
E'en so while in the world they stay may souls  
draw near the skies,  
Lift faces pure and sweet to heaven, tread softly and  
abide  
The coming of the day foretold by heart's ascen-  
sion-tide.

## TRUST

Pure trust? Most mortals know it not—  
That trust which feeleth ne'er a blot  
Of doubt on what the other doth.  
Such thing as mortal men call trust  
Doth give the lie, doth turn to dust  
The thread of truth, defiles the troth  
'Twixt man and man, 'twixt heart and heart:  
Doth reckon in a worldly mart  
How much t'expect, how much to give.  
In lieu of knowledge cometh fear;  
In lieu of heartsease groweth care  
Until we scarce would wish to live.

That other trust? Ah! Well some know  
The power it wields to make them grow  
Anear to God—to make them rise  
From out the midst of choking care,  
From hell beneath until they dare  
Aspire to reach the highest skies,  
Sweet realms of peace. Forever sure  
Come weal come woe, trust doth endure  
'Twixt them and God and hearts they love,  
All doubt, all untrue thought they sink,  
And weave a chain whose ev'ry link  
Is fastened close and clinched above.

Such trust is clad in garments white;  
Wears jewels seen in darkest night;  
Its heart pure gold, its steps all true.  
Its song the same—the old yet new.

## THE SOUL'S MASK

Smiling face and aching heart,  
Peals of laughter, then pain's dart  
Piercing through our very soul—  
For the falseness, toll, bell, toll.

Jesting words and memory sad,  
Joy-notes struck whilst all unclad,  
Bruised, sore-wounded feels the soul—  
For the falseness, toll, bell, toll.

## THE CHRIST-TIDE

Mystical blending of birth and of life,  
Mystical power to put away strife,  
Mystical cleansing of hearts from all sin,  
Mystical raiment born from within.

Mystical tide with meaning most sweet,  
Mystical truth with goodness replete,  
Mystical shadow and mystical light,  
Mystical vision of mystical might.

Mystical love and mystical thought,  
Mystical message by God's angels brought.  
Oh, mortals take heed, and see the day dawn,  
Heralded thus on that first Christmas Morn!

## CHRISTMAS MORN

When wakes the sun on Christmas morn,  
    Turn to the East for there was born  
Our Jesu, Saviour, Love divine,  
    Our Prince of Peace. Thy heart and mine  
Let rise in solemn gladness, then  
    Pray God His birth in hearts of men.  
So shall we our own blessing reap,  
    The meaning true of Christmas keep.

## WHISPERINGS

When the daylight fades into twilight shades  
I send a sweet thought unto thee  
In an Angel's care; she will bear it there  
And tell thee it cometh from me.

Dost thou hear it, dear, as thou sittest there  
And thinkest of days yet to be?  
Dost thou feel her wings as she stoops and sings,  
"Thy love sends her love unto thee?"

Dost thou answer then with a deep heart-throb,  
"Oh, Spirit, whoever thou art!  
Take my message now, my most sacred vow,  
I love her with all of my heart."

## NOW

Build bridges to-day lest to-morrow shall find you  
    Unable to gather the timber you'll need;  
Work now in life's garden lest evening shall see you  
    Too weary to sow even tiniest seed.

## TO VICTORY'S HEIGHTS

The inner-whispered word he knew and rose  
Through cloud-flecked day or sun or starry night.  
Borne upward 'mid the silences, his flight  
Safe measured by the growth of soul. In throes  
Of deepest agony he fought dread foes  
Within his breast: yet beckoning on, the light  
Of days to be—vouchsafed in vision bright—  
His lodestar shone. No other sign he chose.

This his reward: That as he higher rose  
And deeper drank at fount whence wisdom  
flows,  
Led by his song th' unseen the real to men  
became—  
Not earth but heaven their pilgrim-aim.  
Nor asked he more. But one onlooking found  
His work as poet, prophet, priest, love-crowned.

## THOU SHALT BE COMFORTED

Let but the rays of God's glad sunlight fall upon  
thy tears  
And straight a rainbow shall be born—hope scatter  
all thy fears.

## THE AFTERMATH COMETH

Along the Aisle of Days we walk so blind we can-  
not see  
That fairest buds are ripening fast in wondrous  
mystery.  
At Sorrow's womb we look aghast nor dream that  
through the might  
Of pangs untold may birth be giv'n to resurrection-  
light.

## THE OTHER SIDE

When upon you fall life's shadows  
And the day seems dark and drear,  
All unclouded, bathed in glory  
Shines the other side anear.

Nearer far than mortals dream it,  
Just a filmy veil between.  
Rise ye then ye weary people,  
From the East the sunlight gleam!

Rise and let the gloomy shadows  
Fade from out your gaze to-day!  
Upward glancing, see the radiance  
'Yond the clouds stream o'er your way.

Here or there—what is it, tell me!  
Heartaches prove the strength of love;  
Shadows mean that light is shining,  
Earth foretells the heaven above.

Oh, the gladness of the Vision,  
When though earth is dark and drear,  
For our comfort, bathed in glory,  
Shines the other side anear.

## CLOUDS

“Oh, clouds dispel and let the light  
Burst full and clear upon my sight!”  
Thus moaned a Soul.

The answer came: “Dear Soul, remove  
Thyself the clouds, thy faith thus prove  
Then reach thy goal.”

“Myself the clouds so black, so drear,  
Uplift alone? In mercy hear,  
Lend me some aid.”

Again the Voice: “The clouds look black  
Because in trust thou now dost lack.  
Thyself them made.”

“Myself them made? Oh, God! Not say  
Such bitter word when I do pray  
For grace bestowed.”

“Thou prayest child, and then thou dost  
On thine own strength rely. Thou must  
Remove the load.”

“How can I do so hard a thing?  
Wilt thou not then in pity bring  
An angel nigh?”

“The angels, child, are ever near,  
Their absence thou need’st never fear,  
Love cannot die.  
The light still shines with radiance bright  
And clouds but prove that in thy might  
Not that of faith  
Thou trustest most. Cast self aside,  
Lean on My strength, make Me thy guide  
For life, by death.”

“Dear God, forgive! Like beacon-light  
That guides a storm-tossed bark at night,  
Thy word to me.

And though my goal seem far away,  
Though shadows sometimes dim life’s day,  
I’ll trust in Thee.”

## THOUGHT

Though I should speak in unknown tongue and  
seem so far away  
Yet would I reach in thought thy heart, thy thought  
my pulse would sway.  
And while I'd feebly call thy name (to human  
sense) yet strong  
Within thy soul thou'dst feel my voice, thy heart  
would catch my song.

## “SORROWFUL, YET ALWAY REJOICING”

A sepulchre within thy heart hast built,  
Between its narrow walls hast dared to lay  
God-given love, God-given hope, and pave  
The way about thee with thy moans so that  
The charnel-sadness of thy life doth chill  
Well-nigh to death those other souls? Know'st not  
Thy fault? See'st not thy selfishness exclude  
The sun's glad rays which stream anear? Canst thou  
Absolve thyself when those about thee need  
Thy help, thy cheer?

Fain would'st thou tread the garden fair of peace?  
Would'st rest thee in its shade and cull to wear  
Upon thy breast its lilies pure and sweet?  
If thou could'st enter it with that which now  
Thou cherishest so close, a withering blight  
From thee would fall on every flower, the birds  
Would muted be, and to thy soul the Voice  
Of God would speak: “What dost thou here? De-  
part,  
The bitter knowledge of thy selfishness  
Within thy heart!”

I would not ask thy sorrow flung away—  
Thy very being knit with it so close—  
But with the rod of human sacrifice  
Of self I'd have thee gently touch it that  
The waters of sweet sympathy may flow  
From thee to all mankind. The Gardener Who  
Hath planted in thy heart the power to grieve,  
Doth long for thee to bring forth blossoms white  
Of thought and deed, t'enrich with blessings fair  
Hearts everywhere.

What if thy aching breast hold healing balm  
For some sore-stricken one? What if thy smile  
Shall turn to sweet the bitter in his cup  
Of life, remove the screen which hath debarred  
His seeing God, and to his soul bring calm?  
Within no sepulchre thou'dst shrine thy grief;  
Into the world thou'dst take it, glorified  
By love; though sorrowful, thou would'st rejoice  
With heart and voice.

## THY CROSS

Hold thy cross up straight before thee,  
Never think it aught but gold,  
And be sure the dear Lord gave thee  
What would best thy strength unfold.

Had He wished to make it lighter  
Thou might'st had it feather-weight;  
But that Faith might shine the brighter  
What He gave to thee looks great.

Use thy power of firm endurance,  
Ay, e'en bravely to the end;  
What thou thinkest now a hindrance  
Shall thy soul to glory send.

Thou shalt see thy cross in heaven  
With thy best thoughts sparkling bright,  
And then know to thee 'twas given  
As a help to find the light.

## THE DIRGE OF THE OLD YEAR

The Old Year goes, its flight men mourn.  
Why grieve they now? Each day in turn  
Hath passed and they have thought  
'Twas but a day. Had they but wrought  
(Knowing that fruit must come from seed)  
With heart and prayer to make each deed  
Shine like a star in garb most fair  
For their immortal souls to wear,  
No requiem would they sing to-night  
But see the year in flood of light  
Recede and join the æons old,—  
Its memory framed in burnished gold.

## TO WATERS STILL AND PASTURES GREEN

Bring to me one who can with music stay my grief;  
Not with a dirge would I be quieted but with some  
chant

Melodious, sweet, point me the way again to  
heaven's gate,

Wide open fling the doors now closed between my  
heart and God.

Show me the parable of love all centered in the Man  
Of Sorrows crowned with gracious smiles Who  
midst of agony

Could yet of others' welfare think and pardon ene-  
mies.

Sing to me not of that with which I'm choked but  
comfort me

With that I lack. Lead to my Shepherd and to  
waters still

Until my soul shall bathe in them, my hand shall  
surely clasp

The staff He'll hold for me and I shall face the  
pastures green.

So shall I then be comforted.

## HIS SOUL

Suppose a Soul were failing quite to grow  
On earth, that basest passions choked so close  
The good, it could not free itself and rise  
Beyond the clay-bound thought. Suppose that Soul  
Were loosed from body's chains and taken where  
Eternity's real life it might begin,  
Its truest freedom learn. Suppose your love  
For him lived on in wondrous-pulsing thought,—  
Dear Mother his, would your tears fall?

Suppose a Soul grown beauteous white were borne  
Away one day to Paradise the while  
You stayed behind. Suppose you knew that Soul  
Had earned a place and taken it with saints,  
That toil and loss were over quite, and joyed  
That higher service had been won. Ah, yes!  
Suppose all this, yet being true within  
To aching breast where he lay pillow'd once,—  
Dear Mother his, would your tears fall?

## LIFE'S THREADS

If I could take the threads which fall about me soft  
And by one stroke quick weave them into pattern  
    rare,

Would I not err? Would I not spoil the shape or  
    mar,

Perchance, some spot where whitest thread should  
    form device

I know not now? Would I not better leave to Him  
Who gives each thread its own peculiar, lustrous  
    hue,

    The weaving, too?

And though in childish ignorance I sometimes wish  
The pattern wove, full well I know—love's lesson  
    learned—

That every thread is falling safe in its own place;  
By sudden gleam of prophecy bestowed, in awe be-  
    hold

Life's aftermath with raiment for my soul to wear,  
It woven here and every thread reflecting bright  
    The Weaver's light.

## WHEN DAYS ARE DARK

Why dwell among the shadows when the light is  
shining clear?

Why chant a miserere when from earth to heaven  
drawn near

Outrings a song of triumph in whose strains you  
may take part,

And echoes soft your voice repeat to some near-  
fainting heart?

Why stand beneath the ladder when to climb means  
stepping where

Will come the larger vision and you'll breathe the  
purer air?

Why blind your eyes with cobwebs when great  
glories are revealed,

And they who learn to read it find the book of  
life ne'er sealed.

From thickets of disquietude sweet thoughts of  
peace may spring,

O'er quicksands of uncertainty hope spread her  
silver wing.

'Mid tangles of discouragement fair buds of promise  
grow,

And tempests of heart's cravings may leave calm  
with after glow.

You know how live the flowers in the dreary winter  
days,  
Or how responds their seed-life to the influence  
of rays  
Of sunlight piercing through the ground where all  
seems dark and cold,  
How 'mid the soft white petals there is formed  
the heart of gold?

Eternity's great branches, what our finite minds  
term years,  
Have proved a Great Protecting Power at work  
despite men's fears;  
And so just let the sunshine 'mid the shadows glisten  
bright,  
And mounting on Faith's ladder rest your eyes  
with heaven's light.

## MARY, THE MOTHER OF OUR LORD

Dear Mary, Mother faithful! At the cradle of the Lord  
Didst thou comprehend quite fully all the beauty of the Word?  
Didst thou see in vision lofty all the healing He would bring?  
Didst thou hear His voice so holy with God's praises ever ring?  
Didst thou see the cross of Calvary, hear His agonized cry?  
Didst thou see His soul departing—know that it would never die?

Dear Mary, Mother faithful! Mother-love and mother-hope  
Filled thy mother-bosom heaving when upon fair Bethlehem's slope  
First were heard the Christmas angels telling of the wondrous birth,  
Bringing tidings of salvation e'en while souls dwell on the earth.

Dear Mary, Mother faithful! Jesu's holy Mother dear,  
What was then beheld in shadow now thou view'st in vision clear.  
How thy heart must swell with rapture as thy dear Son's armies grow,  
As those hosts of countless thousands with God's holiest light aglow  
March so softly yet so surely, conquering ever in this sign—  
*"Via crucis, via lucis, Jesu, Saviour, Love divine."*

Dear Mary, Mother faithful! Once again we sing  
the birth  
In fair Bethlehem's lowly stable,—hail the Christ-  
Child come to earth;  
And while looking at the cradle see above it bend  
so sweet  
Thy face, our Jesu's Mother, with God's love and  
peace replete.

## HOW SHALL THEY FACE THE WORLD ?

### A RESURRECTION SONG

How shall they face the world, what raiment shall  
they wear,  
Those souls who day by day must work allotted task  
Whilst inwardly with heart-strings all unstrung  
they ask  
The shattering of the shell, aye, pray release? Who  
dare  
Approach those stricken ones, I say, and bid them  
tear  
From out their life their pain, or tell them gilded  
mask  
To weave with pleasure's loom, in her fresh bright-  
ness bask  
Until (untrue to all) they shall forget their prayer?

Oh, what were life if such could for one loss atone!  
Full well they know who've suffered most, borne  
Sorrow's palm,  
That when the pain pressed hard their heaven-sent  
balm  
Unselfish service was,—an echo from the throne  
Of The Eternal Thought. Blest work, heart's  
anchor grown,  
Fast held them 'mid the storm until with pulse-beat  
calm  
They knew the road they trod and learned without  
alarm  
In majesty of grief their victory was won.

How shall they face the world, what raiment shall  
they wear  
Who, looking at their life through human lens, find  
naught  
But chasm deep and difficult to cross? All wrought  
In wondrous hue their garb so be for love they bear  
Of love most infinite some revelation fair  
To brother man. Thus robed, their faces turned to  
port,  
The chasm may they bridge with happiest, heaven-  
born thought,  
Tread softly and await the glory over there.

## LOVE'S VISION

Love's vision sees through fast-barred doors Love's  
hidden thought,

And soul doth feel the imprint of each touch of joy  
Or pain that's felt by other self, doth see the throbs,  
Doth know the struggles fierce of inner man, doth  
learn

Somehow the good and ill, doth yearn.

Such love were rare,  
Doth ever mean self set aside. What can it do?  
"One thing it can." ('Twas unseen voice I heard  
when dark

The daylight seemed, and laughter prelude but of  
pain.)

"The best gift Love to Love can make is taking self  
To God. So Love doth gain and give, were't soon  
or late,

An unseen strength to think, to bear, to will, to  
serve.

Nor asphodel nor rue need be the signet worn  
But violets sweet for faithfulness. No fetter false  
Doth bind its acts, but sheafed they are by string  
Of pearls, the one end held in heav'n—each pearl a  
prayer".

(Strange problem worked  
In daily life where stepping-stones not always smooth  
Are placed across earth's chasms deep. Strange, did  
I say?

Not so, but only rare to human sense the power  
Full clear to comprehend the length and breadth,  
the depth

And height of God's best gift to man.)

## “PEACE AT THE LAST”

Look well for the sunlight all ye who now linger  
    Apart in the Valley of Shadows so drear.

Think! Under the frost-hardened ground oft lie  
    hidden

White snowdrops that blossom ere springtime  
    draws near.

Who knows but some storm-beaten soul may soon  
    anchor

Anear you and signal for help you can give?  
The searchlight of hope will you send thro' the  
    tempest

That he, tho' nigh shipwrecked may see it and  
    live?

And what if some weary one aching for kindness  
    Shall touch but the hem of your garment and  
    smile?

Reward will that be for your sorrow borne bravely?  
    Oh, look for the sunlight,—make living worth  
    while.

Out heartaches and longings may come large  
    fruition,

Such bountiful harvests from seed you may sow!  
The reapers, perchance, you'll not see as they pass  
    you,

Their song of thanksgiving you never may know,  
But softly you'll travel the road to the hilltop,  
    Life's love and life's duty forever made one.

Each dawn shall encourage, each eventide calm you  
    Till with the last sunset will be whispered, “Well  
    done”!

## RESURRECTION-LINKS

A chain to bind us fast to heaven we ask  
Nor see how every common thing of earth  
As well as beatific vision hath  
Within its being a bright-burnished link  
No mortal hand hath forged. Steeped in the drug  
Of self, too dull our senses are to search  
The heart of each day's happenings for that  
Which only makes life real and true. Did we  
But read aright the message of the rose,  
The mystery of pain, the love of friends,  
The cruel sting, the laurel-wreath bestowed  
Or crown of thorns; did we with vision clear  
Perceive the inner grace of all, believe  
That never one thing comes to you, to me,  
(Or storm or calm) without its special need,  
Soon would we weld strong resurrection-links  
Into an endless chain—a circle white  
With deeds unselfish, love unfeigned, and know  
That heaven on earth begins—God everywhere.

## DE PROFUNDIS

Oh, Thou! Who seest deeper far than man  
The thought which sways each wanderer from the  
fold ;  
Who knowest best of all the powers of hell,  
The poisoned wine they pour out chalice gold,  
Their craftiness in binding chains of guilt  
About their victim's souls,—is life on earth  
The end of all for those who tempest-tossed  
By sin dash soul and body on its reefs?  
No other world where prodigals may seek  
Their Father—God? No candle burning bright  
When on that awful wreck death's shadows fall?  
No further hope for such when bells are tolled,  
When “earth to earth” is said and requiems sung?  
Shall breaking hearts live on in agony  
Not asking heaven with their loved in hell?  
Is every wanderer damned? Is there no spark  
Of good, infinitesimal may be,  
Alive? At Thy command may not that germ  
Be sifted from the rotting mass of chaff,  
Be nurtured into strength through angels' care  
Ere reaping time shall come? Are there no aisles  
Of penitence where disembodied souls  
May earn the right to tread their way anear  
The throne of grace and there absolved lay down  
Regret, remorse forevermore,—within  
The circle of Thy love find their name writ?  
Out of the deep men cry in agony  
“Father, forgive”!

Softly this message came.

Not in earth's balances are weighed the souls  
Of men nor earth computed wage e'er paid  
Where He The Great Assizer rules, not just  
Alone but merciful. Upon thy hearts  
The finger of His hand hath traced His mark  
Of omnipresence. Then, love being love  
Thy tears must cleanse the way for perfect trust.  
Through doubt of that unbroken chain which links  
All souls to God, be not a stumbling block.  
God loves the sinner though the sinner loves  
Him not. His way to bring His wanderers home  
There none shall know till each one for himself  
Shall read his own sad-blotted book of life,  
With vision purified shall see a love  
More tender, mightier far than aught on earth,  
In every happening shall behold his God.

Amen.

## WHEN YOU AND I

From body freed in the Beyond shall meet,  
Each in the other's eyes will look and read  
Forgiveness of misunderstandings here,—  
A compensation great but all too late  
For happiness on earth. Wherefore to-day  
Out fullness of my heart I pray that you  
My every thoughtless word and deed forgive  
Ere death destroy the human right to choose  
The bitter or the sweet. Within my breast  
The hope I hold to bless where I have hurt.  
The keystone of your life I'd touch with peace  
And waft through space though face to face again  
We never stand, sure comfort in your need.  
I who have watched the destiny of hearts  
Find naught but loving service worth their while.  
Misunderstandings choke us, cloud our sky  
Till in a frenzied whirl of doubt all trust  
Is lost. Ah, then our hearts grow faint, our eyes  
See not the vision of the land where faith  
Is changed to perfect knowledge, hope to sight.  
Our ears refuse to hear the wondrous song  
That Bethlehem's angels sang when Christ was born.  
Embittered grow we when we should know peace.  
Oh, friend who once did hold me dear, your soul  
And mine shall one day meet, renew their troth.  
Meanwhile, on earth forgive and understand!

## THE VISION OF THE STARS

*Bright-gemmed the heaven of men's hopes with stars  
They would attain but in their hearts despair  
Doth swing its leaden weights until they faint:  
Thus the recording angel wrote, and wept.*

A crucial test that Vision bright beheld!  
So human we in confines of the flesh,  
Scarce wonder that we hesitate to scale  
Those starlit heights whose beauty Love foretells.  
Though spirit ardently desires the flight,  
The power to comprehend the length and breadth,  
The depth and height of The Eternal Thought  
Is rare to finite sense, and thus we faint.  
So much of new the future holds in store,  
'Twere wisdom to recall the past, its trend  
From shadows to the light. Else had the stars  
Been unperceived though near at hand they shone.

They who have probed

The mysteries of life, its frailties  
Of human kind, its ever varying moods,  
Have found beneath the poor, rent garment wrapt  
About men's souls another one, dust-freed  
And woven with most brilliant threads whose price  
He knows, alone, who weaves. Discordant notes—  
The circumstance environment may make—  
May jar and fret and yet declare themselves  
Development's necessity on earth.  
Exultant joys and misereres oft  
Within the soul may welded be but each  
Its separate seed must sow, some mile-stone stamp  
For aye with precept learned—a fragment small  
Of great, eternal Truth. That Mind which out  
From chaos brought forth light, that Law which  
sways

The universe—the two but one—reacts  
And throbs in every breast, defines although  
Men see it not the roadway heavenward.  
While spirit solves the mystery of the hour,  
Experience wields a magic, mighty wand  
With which she opens wide the gates that lead  
To wisdom's richest fields, men garnering there  
All each has strength to reap. ('This have they  
proved

Who have attained the heights).

Oh, realms of Truth!

Oh, goal for which men yearn, aglow with flames  
Of sacred fire! The ego in me claims  
Its heritage and were no other one  
To climb the path calm would I go nor fear  
The loneliness. Faith brushes doubt aside  
And points to that great galaxy of stars  
Whose rays or dim to me or luminous  
Unsparing knowledge of soul growth reveals  
Unerringly. Not for ourselves alone  
May you and I press on. No narrow road  
We tread, its boundaries the walls of self,  
But one vast thronged with a great multitude  
Of souls each bearing in itself the germ  
Of holiness although most sadly stained  
And rent th' enfolding garment, human-frail  
The habitation where it dwells on earth.  
Not cold our hearts must be nor dumb our lips,  
Not faltering our feet as day by day  
With all this quivering life close touch we keep.  
Think you those brilliant stars will serve as guides  
To some glad paradise of full content  
If he whose moans we've heard lies prone, by earth  
Compelled most earthy still t'exist? Think you  
Our power of vision will not fade so be

We reach not out and point to him the light?  
If he, arising from his bed of clay,  
Speed upward as with wings towards the goal  
And pass us on the way, shall we rejoice?  
That's test of spirit-strength. (In minor chords  
Sometimes we hear the Master's gentlest touch  
And learn his thought divine.)

Bright-gemmed the skies!  
The angel of the covenant of peace  
With steadfast purpose, searching eyes, draws nigh  
To help men build out iron will a bridge  
Across the yawning chasm of doubt, to plant  
Anear the edge of every precipice  
(Where life seems not worth while, oblivion sweet,)  
The seeds of victory o'er self, send forth  
The silver threads of spiritual desire.  
A wondrous power those stars possess to draw  
And fasten to themselves the glistening strands.  
Immutable the law of glad response  
To every soul's awakening cry, for none  
Can fail to reach th' Eternal Father's heart  
Nor find itself unsought. Forever blest  
That sacrament divine when finite wills  
Blend with the Infinite, and wondrously  
Each heart's ascension proves heav'n's swift approach!  
Why should we faint? Bathed in immortal rays  
Of love and light and life, our eyes we turn  
Towards the glory of the stars, and pray  
We keep our vision bright.

## FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN

We are so little, we who would to heaven attain!  
Our words—we call them prayers—we upward  
waft on wing  
Too frail to bear them far from our weak frames.

Naught bring  
We of a living, sacrificial gift, but stain  
With grossest selfishness the all-enduring chain  
Which links mankind to God. To earth we cling  
E'en while with service of the lips, not heart, we  
sing

“Let me but see Thy face,” then moan that prayer  
is vain.

So faithless we though on the brow Christ's sign is  
worn,

So hopeless that our spirits have no anchorage,  
So wayward that we fail to make our pilgrimage  
A joy. Undisciplined, unsatisfied, we pawn  
Our higher, nobler selves receiving dross outdrawn  
From the great treasury of worldliness, nor gage  
Redemption-price until fierce storms about us rage,  
Our loss unknown till on reflection's waves we're  
borne.

Would'st soar indeed to heaven's gates? Then find  
thy place

Within th' arena vast of earth nor moment pause  
To deem it great or small for thee. By nature's laws  
Thy life must be fulfilled through growth. If thine  
the grace

Content t'obey each duty's call the while thy face  
Toward Jerusalem is turned then from the stores  
Of faith and hope and love thou'l gather that which  
draws

Souls heavenward, th' ascent with pure desires keep  
pace.

## RECOMPENSE

Glad service makes true royalty, and they shall reign  
as Kings  
Who know not now the heritage that work for  
others brings;  
Nor dream because unselfish that their raiment glis-  
tens white  
As scattering waves of sunshine they themselves are  
bathed in light.

## WHEN SORROW COMES

God grant I take her by the hand and say  
"We walk together, you and I, to bless  
And not to bring unhappiness." Though day  
To me may often clouded be I pray  
For grace bestowed to patient weave her dress  
Out loving thought, not vain regret, and find  
The Star of Hope upon her breast to bind.

For sorrow comes  
Not just a mocking echo of the past,  
Not cruelly our hearts to stab and scar  
For vengeance sake, not a destructive blast,—  
But in her lies a moral strength of vast  
Importance to men's souls, with large and far  
Out-reaching possibilities like stairs  
On which they climb to God—His thought made  
theirs.

When Sorrow comes  
And on her breast the Star of Hope she wears,  
God grant my love more catholic may grow  
That where (not mine the choice) I see the cares  
Of aching souls, the hurts that no one bares  
To pain-free eyes, there with my heart aglow  
For thankfulness, my sorrow clad in white,  
May I, the glory God's, sow peace, shed light.













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